CLAIMS

I claim:

1. A sheath and string-line tool combination for use with a string, the combination comprising:

a tool having a tool body with a front end and a rear end, a pointed member protruding from the front end, and a latching surface on a side of the tool;

a sheath having a sheath front end and a sheath rear end, a longitudinal axis between said sheath front end and said sheath rear end, a cavity wall defining an interior cavity with an opening receiving the tool, wherein the interior cavity has a forward portion receiving the pointed member and a rearward portion receiving at least a part of the body of the tool;

a locking system releasably locking the tool in the sheath, the locking system comprising a latch that is biased to extend longitudinally rearward over the interior cavity and adapted to cooperate with the tool body latching surface to prevent removal of the tool from the sheath.

2. The combination of Claim 1, wherein said rearward portion of the interior cavity has a limiting surface near said forward portion of the interior cavity, and, when the tool is received in the sheath, the tool body abuts against said limiting surface to limit forward movement of the tool in the interior cavity, and the pointed member extends into the forward portion of the interior cavity, and wherein the latching surface is at a location on the tool from 1/3 – 2/3 of the way from the front tip of the tool body to the rear of the body.

3. The combination of Claim 1, wherein said tool body has a rear end, and a tool longitudinal axis between the front end and the rear end, a side surface generally parallel to the tool longitudinal axis, and said recess is in said side surface, and wherein the forward portion and rearward portions of the interior cavity and the opening are aligned generally coaxially on the sheath longitudinal axis, and the locking system comprises a lock member connected to the cavity wall extending generally parallel to the sheath longitudinal axis and pivotal in a plane passing through said sheath longitudinal axis, wherein a rearward end of the lock member is said latch and the lock member is biased to pivot the latch toward the sheath longitudinal axis rearward of said opening.

4. The combination of Claim 3, wherein the lock member integrally extends from the cavity wall, and the lock member pivots in said plane passing through said sheath longitudinal axis by means of a portion of the cavity wall to which the lock member is connected flexing in direction parallel to said plane.

5. The combination of Claim 1, wherein the sheath further comprises a base with a planar outer surface adapted for attachment to a chalk box.

6. The combination of Claim 1, wherein the sheath cavity wall has a slot through which said string passes from the forward portion of the interior cavity to outside the sheath.

7. The combination of Claim 1, comprising a string exit through the sheath cavity wall, wherein the string exit is an open front of the cavity wall.

8. The combination of Claim 1, wherein the pointed member is a sharpened spike, and the tool further comprises a clamping unit with a through-hole receiving the spike a setscrew extending into the clamping unit and having a flat end contacting the spike, wherein the setscrew is in threaded connection with the clamping unit and adapted to be screwed into the clamping unit to tighten the flat surface against the spike.

9. A tool sheath and chalk box combination comprising:

a sheath for a string-line anchor tool having a tool body, a pointed member and a string, the sheath having a sheath front end and a sheath rear end, a longitudinal axis between said sheath front end and said sheath rear end, a cavity wall surrounding and defining an interior cavity with an opening adapted to receive the anchor tool, wherein the interior cavity has a forward portion adapted to receive the pointed member and a rearward portion adapted to receive at least a part of the tool body;

a locking system adapted to releasably lock the anchor tool in the sheath; and

a chalk box containing chalk for coating the string of the anchor tool;

wherein the sheath is attached to the chalk box.

10. The combination of Claim 9, wherein said rearward portion of the interior cavity has a limiting surface near said forward portion of the interior cavity, and wherein said limiting surface is adapted to limit forward movement of the anchor tool in the interior cavity.

11. The combination of Claim 9, wherein the forward portion and rearward portions of the interior cavity and the opening are aligned generally coaxially on the sheath longitudinal axis, and the locking system comprises a lock member connected to the cavity wall extending generally parallel to the sheath longitudinal axis and pivotal in a plane passing through said sheath longitudinal axis, wherein the lock member has a rearward latch end and the lock member is biased to pivot the latch end toward the sheath longitudinal axis rearward of said opening.

12. The combination of Claim 11, wherein the lock member integrally extends from the cavity wall, and the lock member pivots in said plane passing through said sheath longitudinal axis by means of a portion of the cavity wall to which the lock member is connected flexing in direction parallel to said plane.

13. The combination of Claim 9, wherein the sheath comprises a base with a planar outer surface attached to the chalk box.

14. The combination of Claim 9 wherein the sheath cavity wall has a slot through which said string passes from the forward portion of the interior cavity to outside the sheath and into the chalk box to be in contact with the chalk.

15. A sheath system for a combination string-line anchor and plumb bob tool, the tool having a tool body and a pointed spike extending forward from the tool body and a string extending from the tool, the sheath system comprising:

a sheath having a sheath front end and a sheath rear end, a longitudinal axis between said sheath front end and said sheath rear end, a cavity wall surrounding and defining an interior cavity with an opening adapted to receive the tool, wherein the interior cavity has a forward portion adapted to receive the pointed spike and a rearward portion adapted to receive at least a part of the body of the tool;

a locking system adapted to releasably lock the tool in the sheath, the locking system comprising a lock member connected to the cavity wall and that is pivotal in a plane parallel to the longitudinal axis of the sheath, the lock member having a rearward latch end and a handle at or near the rearward latch end, wherein the lock member is biased to place the rearward latch end generally across a portion of the opening for extending into a recess of the tool body rearward of the opening to prevent removal of the tool from the sheath, and wherein the handle is adapted, when pressed away from the cavity wall, to pivot the lock member so that the rearward latch end rises away from the opening.

16. A sheath system as in Claim 15, further comprising a chalk box containing chalk, wherein the sheath is attached to the chalk box.

17. A sheath and string-line tool combination for use with a string, the combination comprising:

a tool having a tool body with a front end and a rear end, a pointed member protruding from the front end, and a latching surface on a side of the tool;

a sheath having a sheath front end and a sheath rear end, a longitudinal axis between said sheath front end and said sheath rear end, a cavity wall defining an interior cavity with an opening receiving the tool, wherein the interior cavity has a forward portion receiving the pointed member and a rearward portion receiving at least a part of the body of the tool;

a locking system comprising at least a portion of the cavity wall curving over the interior cavity to retain the tool in the cavity.

18. A combination as in Claim 17, wherein the cavity wall curves in an arc in the range of 25 – 55 degrees up from horizontal.

19. A combination as in Claim 17, wherein the locking system comprises a left and a right cavity wall curving upward and inward toward each other to define a cavity entry between

the left and right walls, wherein the tool snaps into the cavity through said cavity entry by sliding between the left and right cavity walls.

20. A combination as in Claim 17, wherein the front end of the sheath is open so that it is adapted to allow a string from the tool to pass out of the sheath through said open front end.